

REMARKS

Claims 12, 14-17, 20 and 38 have been objected to because of minor informalities. In response thereto, Applicants have amended the claims to address the concerns of the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 18, 33, 34 and 38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chaussey et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,022,312. Claims 3, 13-17, 20-28 and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chaussey et al. '312. The Examiner has also indicated that Claims 4, 5, 8, 9 11 and 19 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has now been amended to recite the allowable subject matter of claim 4. As independent claim 1 is now deemed to be patentably distinguishable from the prior art references, the remaining claims dependent therefrom are also patentably distinguishable.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the amended claims and the claims dependent there from are in proper form. The Applicants respectfully contend that Chaussey et al. '312 does not anticipate the claimed invention under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). The Applicants also respectfully contend that the teachings of Chaussey et al. '312 do not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Thus, claims 1-28 and 33-38 are considered to be patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record.

The application is now considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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